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SUBJECT: KAGAME CRITICIZES NATION'S OFFICIALS FOR ALLOWING MISBEHAVIOR AND LACK OF ACCOUNTABILITY

REF: A. 04 KIGALI 1416

[1](#)B. 04 KIGALI 322

[1](#)B. 04 KIGALI 198

[1](#)1. SUMMARY: In his closing address to over 800 GOR officials attending a constitutionally mandated "National Council of Dialogue", President Kagame hailed "good governance, security and patriotism" -- rather than "foreigners' wishes and beliefs" -- as the foundation for Rwanda's development. He emphasized the importance of communities rooting out "bad behaviour", and called for greater accountability for officials implementing government directives. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. On December 21-22, 2004, President Paul Kagame chaired Rwanda's second annual "National Council of Dialogue", in accordance with the 2003 Constitution. Article 168, in the section of the constitution on decentralized authority, establishes a "National Council of Dialogue" -- consisting of the President, and five representatives of each of Rwanda's town councils, municipalities, and 106 districts -- to be chaired by the President and attended by cabinet members, members of parliament, and all 12 provincial governors. Over 800 participants attended the 2004 forum in Kigali, whose agenda called for participants to make recommendations about good governance, security, patriotism, poverty reduction and economic prosperity.

[1](#)3. In his closing remarks, President Kagame emphasized government officials' responsibilities and accountability for promoting quality public service. Post's informal translation of key excerpts from Kagame's remarks (originally delivered in Kinyarwanda) follows below.

[1](#)4. BEGIN TEXT:

"In this Dialogue Forum, Rwanda's problems have been discussed, and strategic plans have been set up. The next step is to take specific actions for social and economic development. Good governance, security, and patriotism must be foundations of this social and economic development. Rwanda has the capacity, but specific actions must occur. The most important thing will be changing our ways of thinking [imyumvire] to aim at allowing efficient ways of actions [imikorere], and commitment to productivity [umusaruro mwiza]. People in leadership positions at all levels must commit themselves to teach those values to others through examples."

"This second National Dialogue Summit should be the beginning of new methods of action that must characterize Rwanda in the near future. People, especially those in leadership positions, must understand that their actions must be done in the public interest, in order to create a brighter future for future generations. Rwanda's development cannot depend on foreigners' wishes and beliefs."

"[...] Questions have frequently been raised related to community responsibility. The community must have characteristics reflecting everybody's values. The community must be characterized by values that don't allow wrongdoing [ikibi] and their consequences. Wrongdoers must be responsible for their acts. They should be blamed and/or punished as a means to learn how to do good things. Those who refuse to change their bad behavior -- commonly known as the incorrigible [ruharwa], who will never listen to advice -- must also respond, through their acts, and stop continuing their bad behavior."

"If the community tolerates bad behavior, even by an individual, the bad behavior risks becoming the community's behavior. People start thinking that that bad behavior is something worth imitating, especially when there are benefits attached to it. That's how bad behaviors take root in the community."

"[...] Questions were also raised about repeating objectives that are never implemented. People should think about the reasons for that: when there is evidence that some objectives were previously either implemented voluntarily or by coercion. People should think about the reasons why the same objectives become stagnant at a

certain point. In my view, the reason behind that is that people let it become this way. People in charge of coordinating the implementation of these objectives only talk -- instead of acting, coordinating, and enforcing actions."

"Take the example of environmental degradation: the consequence for the community is erosion and a reduction of rainfall, but there is no direct consequence for individuals who caused environment degradation. There must be something not quite right, related to fulfilling duties, on the part of people in leading positions. We must make introspection and discover what it is."

"People in the leadership sometimes fail to distinguish between personal and public interests linked to their responsibilities. I think the major problem lies there. Most of the time, they spend more time on things that relate to personal interests than community interests. I think this is the only reason why things are never implemented. However, you may think about it another time, and maybe you can identify other reasons."

"There are a lot of repeated recommendations from various meetings and seminars, including Cabinet meetings. If tapes of the meetings were played, one would notice that there are people repeating the same things all along for years. We must establish responsibilities, in order to ask for an explanation each time there is no action taken when a decision was taken. There should be a way to request accountability in order to promote attentiveness [kwirinda uburangare] and respect for hierarchy [kwirinda ukutumva]."

"I think we should find time to evaluate the implementation of strategies and recommendations we make year after year. We should establish accountability at all levels. Otherwise, we will repeat over and over again the same things."

"Accountability also refers to business agreements at all levels (in agriculture, construction, and other sectors). I think people should develop a culture to abide by contracts. Each party in a contract must be aware of the other party's interests. They both must understand the importance of fulfilling their duties. Otherwise, it can lead to a misconception of duties, when there is no direct consequence affecting individual interests. We must develop a community that cannot tolerate any failure to fulfill quality/responsibility. A sense of quality and responsibility can influence the community's ways of thinking and its objectives."

"[...] I met a participant in this Forum who complained about food poisoning. Later, I was informed that about a hundred participants were hospitalized because of food poisoning. In my opinion, the food caterer must be held responsible for his poor services, and no payment should be made before clarifying the reasons for these poor services."

"People lacking sufficient business experience don't bother taking enough care of their services, and customers sometimes accept expensive and health-threatening services without objection. People should be held accountable for bad services. This also applies to elected people on the basis of the quality of their services, who must be accountable for meeting their responsibilities."

"[...] In meetings like this one, people always contribute good ideas, which are never implemented as a result of individuals' and our community's tolerance of lack of accountability. Every bad service and bad habit must be denounced, wherever it is found."

"[...] People sometimes prefer not to denounce bad service or bad habits because of personal interests, thus sacrificing the community's interests. This should be tolerated only when efforts are being for improvement."

"For example, 'genocide ideology' has become a discussion topic during meetings. People should dare to be frank with individuals with the ideology, because the consequences of their ideology can fall upon the community. Another example can be people destroying anti-erosion utilities while others are watching. I would like to emphasize the importance of accountability and responsibility."

"Talking about corruption in general, remember some people were compelled to resign their positions. There must be a continuous effort to make people distinguish public interests from personal interests. We should stop allowing people to sacrifice public interests for their own interests. There must be consequences. Authorities at all levels (cabinet ministers and local authorities) should be the primary actors to promote accountability. We must avoid becoming a country in which everybody prefers not to denounce bad quality service and criminal acts."

"The best thing about leadership is that everybody is free either to participate in it or not. Nobody can be coerced to become a leader. Once into the leadership, people should be ready to fulfill their responsibilities, and to be accountable in case they fail. The population has the right to request leaders' accountability. I would like to encourage them to use their rights."

"Corruption is sometimes justified on the pretext of poverty. Obviously, there is scarcity of resources, but it cannot be a pretext for misusing resources. Let's work step by step."

"I would recommend that participants in the next Forum come with measurable steps to implement the recommendations of the current Dialogue Forum."
END TEXT.

CRITICISM OF OFFICIALS FORESHADOWS PURGE?

15. COMMENT: Kagame's critical remarks foreshadowed the Christmas week announcement that Minister of State for Energy and Infrastructure Sam Nkusi -- the infrastructure ministry's second-highest official and thus a junior member of cabinet -- had resigned amid accusations of corruption. According to an official from Rwanda's energy monopoly, Electrogaz, Nkusi (formerly director-general of Electrogaz and director-general of the telephone monopoly, Rwandatel) was believed to have had strong ties with South African business interests competing against the German company that ultimately received approval to manage Electrogaz before its privatization.

16. Kagame's reminder that "some people were compelled to resign their positions" likely refers to the high-profile departures earlier in 2004 of Supreme Court Vice President Gerald Gahima (previously Rwanda's Prosecutor General and chief interlocutor with the ICTR) and Gahima's brother, former Ambassador to the U.S. Theogene Rudasingwa (who abruptly announced taking a leave of absence from his position as Kagame's presidential chief of staff). Both officials left amid accusations they misused their positions for personal gain (ref B), although neither faced prosecution.

17. Kagame used the national meeting as an opportunity to remind government officials of the continued danger of "genocide ideology", the subject of a major parliamentary report adopted in early 2004 that led to restrictions on NGOs and to the suspension of teachers as late as October (ref A). His repeated references to "leadership" echo his February 2004 remarks to the NEPAD African Peer review Forum, at which he hailed Rwanda as a model for good governance and attributed the 1994 genocide to a "climax of bad leadership" (ref C). Kagame's statement that communities risk being undermined by an individual's "bad behaviour" -- coupled with his admonition to confront individuals with "genocide ideology" -- will likely embolden local officials to take stronger actions against activities either deemed "divisionist" or contrary to the "good governance, security, and patriotism" that Kagame asserts must serve as the foundation of Rwanda's development. END COMMENT.

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